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Montana State Occupational Information Coordinating Committee

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SPRING, 1989
Volume Six - Number Four

MONTANA SOICC NEWSLETTER

Searching For Career Information? Attend an ICDM Workshop!

Practicing counselors can receive training on the availability and use of national and Montana-specific career, occupational and labor market information through two upcoming Improved Career Decision-Making (ICDM) workshops. The program's objective is to help counselors help individuals to make career decisions that better reflect the realities of the labor market.

The workshops are sponsored by the Montana State Occupational Information Coordinating Committee (SOICC).

The workshops are scheduled as follows:

Missoula-Parkside Holiday Inn — **March 29-30, 1989**
200 South Pattee Street
Phone: 721-8550

Billings Roadway Inn — **April 19-20, 1989**
1223 Mullowney Lane
Phone: 248-7151

ANYONE INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE ABOUT AVAILABLE CAREER, OCCUPATIONAL AND LABOR MARKET INFORMATION IS INVITED TO ATTEND AN ICDM WORKSHOP. Anyone who has previously attended an ICDM workshop is welcome to participate again.

There is no charge to attend the workshops. Travel expenses must be paid by you or your employing agencies/programs.

Lodging rates of $24.00 per night (single occupancy) will be provided by host hotels/motels. You will be required to make your own reservations for lodging if necessary. To obtain a state rate, when making your reservations be sure to reference that you will be attending the Improved Career Decision-Making workshop.

If you are interested in attending one of the ICDM workshops, please complete the form on page 7 of this newsletter and mail to the Montana SOICC, P.O. Box 1728, Helena, Montana 59624.

The ICDM workshops will each be limited to 36 participants on a first-come, first-serve basis, so REGISTER EARLY!

PLEASE RETURN

What Will You Be When You Grow Up?

Not long ago we tended to think of the workplace as fairly stable. Consider the question, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" It contains several implicit assumptions:

* You will **be** a **something** (singular), not **do many** things.
* By choosing to be a "something" now, you can assume it will still be around when you grow up.
* You are choosing from a fixed and known number of occupations.
* You will choose only once; a career decision is a once-in-a-lifetime event.
* When you are "grown up" you won't have to worry about the question any more.
* You are not anything now.

Of course, we know now that the workplace is anything but stable. Consider the following:

Mergers, takeovers, downsizing, technology and deregulation are making many of the old rules obsolete.

Concepts such as stability, consistency, security and longevity are giving way to terms such as flexibility, fluidity, transformation and change.

Specialists who have spent years perfecting a skill are told their skills are now too narrow and limited; they must be able to perform a variety of tasks.

Individuals accustomed to working with facts in a structured environment find themselves in group brainstorming activities where they are expected to be creative and use their intuition.

Workers who thought they had "completed their education" and could concentrate on making a living are faced with the necessity for lifelong learning.

Employees trained for a production focus are being assigned to participatory management teams. For some, the stress becomes intolerable and they leave, wondering what happened to the workplace they once knew.

Mid-lifers by the thousands are questioning their career goals, angry at themselves for making such poor career decisions a quarter of a century ago.

Job seekers skilled in wending their way through personnel offices in large firms are finding they need new approaches for the small businesses that account for most of the new job opportunities.

Managers who became successful by focusing continuously on the bottom line are now being asked to emphasize value driven enterprises and to articulate publicly their visions of the future.

The workplace is changing. Young people preparing for it are apprehensive, individuals trying to establish themselves are confused, mid and upper level managers are finding doors closing in front of them, and many workers who did "all the right things" have earned the unenviable title of "dislocated workers."

Economic, demographic and philosophical changes are forcing counselors and clients alike to examine their assumptions about education, training and the way one moves through the workplace. We know, for example, that:

* Many of the jobs people will be doing in the next 15 years don't exist today.

* The typical work week as we know it will apply to fewer and fewer workers. Many, if not most workers, will face periods of unemployment throughout their working lives.

* In 1950, 17 workers paid the benefits of each retiree; by 1992, only three workers will provide the funds for each retiree, and one of these three workers will be a minority.

* In 1983, for the first time in our recorded history, there were more people over 65 than there were teenagers, and that trend will continue for as long as any of us shall live.

* More than half of the growth in the workforce between 1986 and 2000 will occur in 27 occupational areas, with ten of them accounting for one-third of the total growth.

* Between 1986 and 2000 the service producing sector will provide 20 million new jobs, while the goods producing sector will show a slight loss in employment.

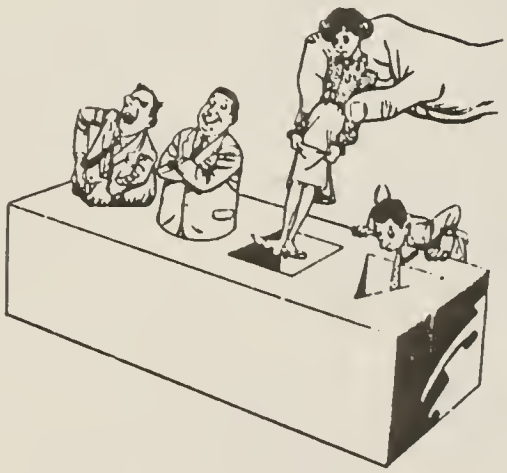
* The U.S. is competing in a global economy, where some workers earn less than $50 per month; events in other countries now affect our economy and workplace in ways that we have never experienced before.

* Two-thirds of all entrants into the workforce during the next ten years will be women.

* We must learn how to work more cooperatively and collaboratively, rather than competitively.

* Only about one job in five will require a four-year college degree.

The list goes on. Good career counseling addresses all of these issues, and effective career counselors are constantly looking for ways to help clients deal with them. Whatever the future holds, we know that a changing workplace requires us to develop new assumptions and ask new questions in order to deal with it effectively. Perhaps some metaphorical thinking would be helpful here.



In the past, we often thought of the workplace as being like a giant box, containing a multitude of differently shaped holes, each representing an occupation. When we decided what we wanted "to be," we examined the appropriate hole in the box, then shaped ourselves, through education and training, so we would fit. It was a fairly simple process. Labor market information was used to help us make a good "match."

Now the workplace is beginning to operate more like an amoeba; it is continually changing and altering its shape. Some occupations are dying while others are being born. Many that are still around don't look anything like they did a few years ago.

Instead of, "What do you want to be when you grow up?", perhaps now a more appropriate question is, "Who are you while you are growing up, and how do you want to move through the workplace?" When we thought in box-like terms, the focus of information was on **definitions, tasks and duties.** Categories were developed to help us **differentiate** among occupations, industries and job duties. When operating in the amoeba, the focus is more on the worker. We use categories and classification systems to help us look at **similarities, relationships, connections** and **transferability.**

Rather than asking people to think of a lifetime occupation, we now encourage them to learn as much as possible about themselves and the workplace, and to consider an array of possibilities. People who prepare themselves to function in an amoeba need a different set of skills than those who operate in a box. They are not nearly as interested in the shape of things as they are in their ability to move with the changes that occur. They also will use labor market information differently.

Some people see our move into the 21st century as among "the best of times." Others aren't so sure. Regardless of what we believe, it appears that career counseling will become increasingly important to nearly everyone. And helping clients use labor market information to make good career decisions will be a major activity for years to come.

SOURCE: 1988 Edition of the Improved Career Decision-Making Participant's Workbook

Not a Person to Waste

As the jobless rate falls, companies confront growing labor shortages. The main cause of the shortage is the baby bust. The low birthrates of the late 1960s and early 1970s mean that there are fewer teenagers and college-age students available today to take on basic service-industry tasks.

Many employers see enough applicants, but far too few of them have the basic skills to handle jobs in an economy that increasingly runs on technology and information.

The labor gaps are likely to persist through the 1990s. That prospect has helped spur Congress to move on a welfare-reform package that would require many recipients to go to work.

Said Arkansas Governor Bill Clinton in support of the measure, "The overriding concern is that we really don't have a person to waste in this country."

SOURCE: Time Magazine, July 18, 1988; NATTS News, August 1988

Mission: Career Planning

In recent years there has been a considerable amount of emphasis on the need to retrain dislocated workers and to better equip young workers entering the labor force with both the basic and technical skills needed to supply American industry with a qualified work force. A primary goal has been to make U.S. industry more competitive in a worldwide economy and improve economic well-being by improving worker productivity.

A fundamental decision faced by someone newly entering the labor force, the dislocated worker or the mid-career adult is that of career choice. The events of the past eight years have shown that a worker is faced not just with a career choice, but rather a career planning or career development process because it is increasingly unlikely that an individual will remain in one occupation his or her entire worklife. Worker productivity and well-informed career planning are critically related.

In 1987, the Gallup Organization was commissioned by the National Career Development Association, the National Center for Research on Vocational Education and the National Occupational Information Coordinating Committee to conduct a survey on various aspects of work in America. The survey was especially directed toward obtaining insights regarding individual planning for careers, including the use of occupational information, current attitudes toward work and the perceived utility of certain experiences in the preparation for work. Some of the highlights of the survey are outlined below:

Many American workers are changing or expect to change jobs.

* In the year prior to the survey, 10% or nearly 11 million workers said they needed help in selecting, changing or obtaining a job. Only 63% of those surveyed expect to stay in their current job over the next three years. Nearly 28 million workers expect to change jobs in the next three years.

Problems in the workplace seem to be underlying factors related to change.

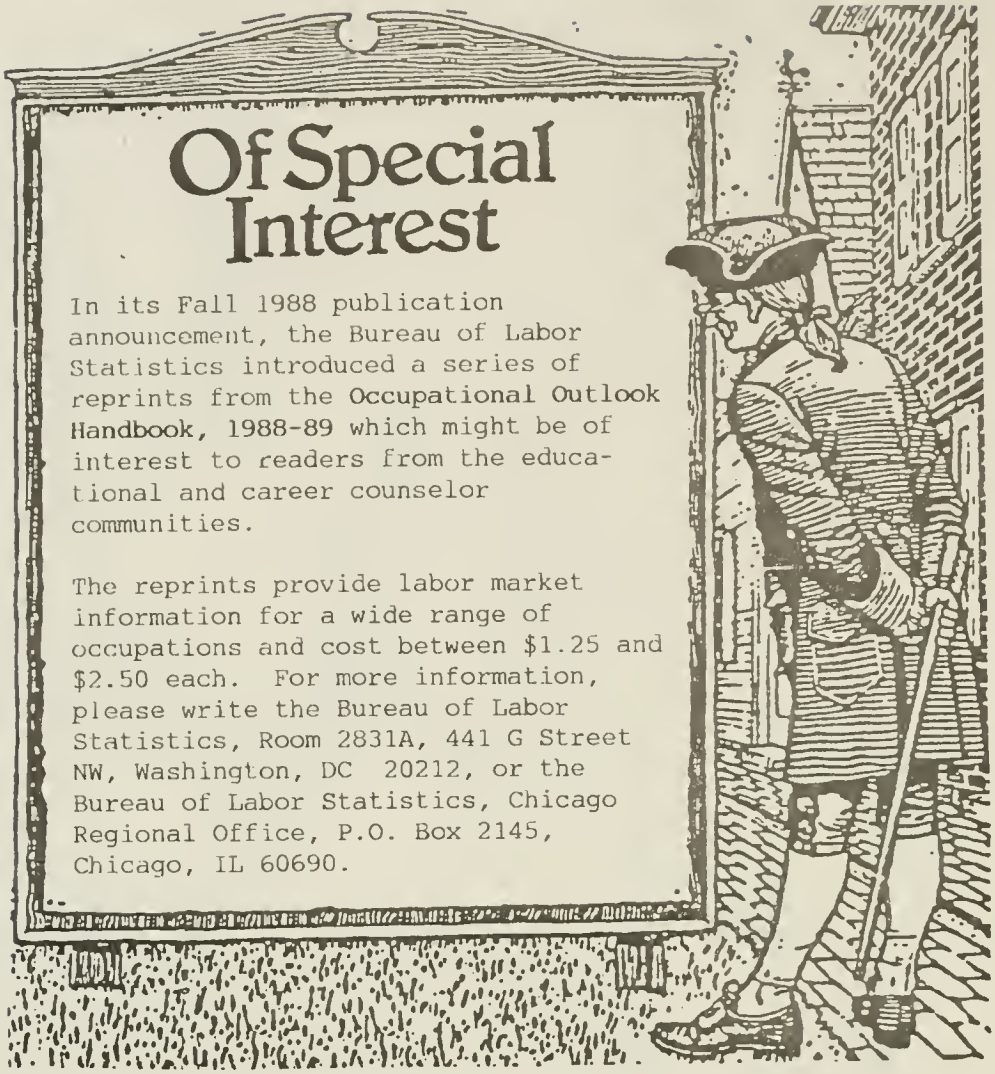
* About 45% of those surveyed had experienced significant job stress; 33% indicated that they had experienced significant conflict between work and family or personal relationships. Workers seem unmotivated. Only about 7% said they could not accomplish more on the job.

There is overwhelming need for assistance in career planning and use of career information.

* Poor planning may account for career change. Only about 39% said they had a career plan to begin with, and 64% said that if they could start over, they would get more information about their potential choices. About 15% of those who needed help did not know where to go. Friends and relations were the most relied-upon sources of assistance. Nearly 38% engaged in self-directed activities when choosing and changing jobs. Nearly half said that even if information is available, adults do not know how to use it.

A 100-page monograph dealing with the problems of planning for and working in America was to be published in January 1989. To receive more information about this publication, write to E. Niel Carey, Executive Director, National Career Development Association, 10214 Blandford Way, Ellicott City, MD 21043.

SOURCE: "Planning For and Working in America: Report of a National Survey" by the National Career Development Association



Of Special Interest

In its Fall 1988 publication announcement, the Bureau of Labor Statistics introduced a series of reprints from the **Occupational Outlook Handbook, 1988-89** which might be of interest to readers from the educational and career counselor communities.

The reprints provide labor market information for a wide range of occupations and cost between $1.25 and $2.50 each. For more information, please write the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Room 2831A, 441 G Street NW, Washington, DC 20212, or the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Chicago Regional Office, P.O. Box 2145, Chicago, IL 60690.

Floundering Math Grades

A study conducted by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) of Princeton, New Jersey, was recently released. Entitled "The Mathematics Report Card--Are We Measuring Up?", the study was based on tests given to 150,000 pupils from 1972 to 1986. The study's assessment of the performance of U.S. high school students in 1986 is dismal:

* More than one fourth of 13-year-old middle schoolers cannot handle elementary school arithmetic.

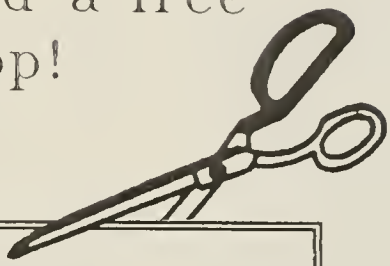
* Nearly one-third of eleventh-graders say they generally do not understand what their math teachers are talking about.

* Only 6% of 17-year-olds can handle algebra or multistep math problems.

* Scores for blacks and Hispanics, despite modest gains, lag 7% to 11% below those for whites.

SOURCE: NATTS News, August 1988

Send your registration form in early if you plan to attend a free ICDM Workshop!



ICDM REGISTRATION FORM

YES, please register me in the following Improved Career Decision-Making (ICDM) workshop:

☐ **March 29-30, 1989 at the Missoula-Parkside Holiday Inn**
200 South Pattee Street, Missoula; phone number 721-8550

☐ I will be staying at the Missoula-Parkside Holiday Inn.

☐ **April 19-20, 1989 at the Billings Roadway Inn**
1223 Mullowney Lane, Billings; phone number 248-7151

☐ I will be staying at the Billings Roadway Inn.

To receive the state rate of $24 single occupancy lodging rate, be sure to reference that you will be attending the Improved Career Decision-Making workshop.

Name _____ Title _____

Address _____ Phone _____

_____

_____

Send registration form to:
Montana SOICC
P.O. Box 1728
Helena, MT 59624

Kate Kahle, Editor
Montana SOICC Newsletter
Volume Six - Number Four

Robert N. Arnold
Program Officer
Montana SOICC

If you would like to contribute to this newsletter, contact the Montana SOICC at P.O. Box 1728, Helena, Montana 59624. The Montana SOICC reserves the right to edit all information submitted.

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If your address has changed, please indicate on this cover and return to the Montana SOICC.

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865 copies of this newsletter were produced at an individual cost of 21.23¢, for a total cost of $183.65, which includes $64.75 for printing and $118.90 for distribution.

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